

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name East Topeka Junior High School

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 1210 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street not for publication \_\_\_\_\_

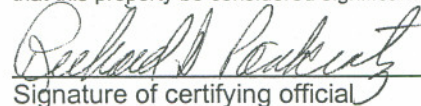
city or town Topeka vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

state Kansas code KS county Shawnee code 177

zip code 66607-1970

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property XX meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide XX locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Signature of certifying official

December 3, 2003

Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_

National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_

National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

East Topeka Junior High School

Property Name

St. Lawrence County, Kansas  
County and State**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A New Deal-era Resources of Kansas**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**10 / 28**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETEroof ASPHALTwalls CONCRETEBRICKother                     **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.



East Topeka Junior High School  
Property Name

St. Lawrence County, Kansas  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1935-1936

### Significant Dates

1937

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Cuthbert & Suehrk—architects

W.E. Glover—associate architect

Bowers & Ingram—builders

### Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 3 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	269860	4324980	3		
2				4		

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Jezak Ford

organization Citysearch Preservation date April 29, 2003

street & number 3628 Holmes St. telephone 816-531-2489

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64109

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

### Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name True Foundation School and Learning Center

street & number 5639 SE 37<sup>th</sup> St. telephone 785-379-0560

city or town Tecumseh state KS zip code 66542

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Section 7 Page 1**

East Topeka Junior High School  
Shawnee County, Kansas

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**Architectural Description**

The East Topeka Junior High School building, located at 1210 E. Eighth Street in Topeka, Kansas is a two-story U-shaped building that nearly fills three former city blocks. The school's site is a three-acre tract bounded by Seventh Street on the north, Lake Street on the west, Eighth Street on the south and Lime Street on the east. Public sidewalks run on the south, west and east sides of the building. The building, constructed from 1935 until 1936, measures approximately 150 feet wide by 250 feet deep.

The school is of poured concrete construction, clad with varying shades of buff brick and ornamented with panels of carved limestone. The building's façade faces south and contains a central three-story tower that houses the main entrance. Secondary entrances are present on the east and west sides of the building, placed within projecting stairwells. Windows are prevalent on the building's south, east and west sides, separated by brick piers. The rear of the building is purely functional and unadorned, containing plain windows and a two-story light court that bisects the building.

The school has a flat roof that drains to the north side. All windows are original and are doublehung in a six-over-six configuration. Modern metal screens now cover these windows to protect the building from vandals. The exposed foundation of the school is poured concrete.

**South Façade**

The 11-bay symmetrical main façade of the East Topeka Junior High School faces south and contains a central three-story entrance tower. Four pairs of windows on the first and second stories surround either side of the tower, culminating in brick pavilions on either end of the façade.

Moving from left to right (west to east), the first bay contains a wide pavilion that is pulled forward from the main plane of the façade. The pavilion consists of brick corner piers that rise from concrete bases to the parapet above the second story. The parapet portions of the corner piers contain caps of carved limestone. A wide section of buff and brown brick in a diamond pattern is laid between the two corner piers at the first and second stories, topped by a course of stone. A stepped parapet in the same diamond pattern of brick rises above this course. An engraved stone plaque is set in the center of this parapet, which is capped with stone.

Pairs of windows in the first and second stories fill bays two through five. Each pair is separated by a wide brick pier that runs from the concrete foundation to the top of the second story. A stone carving that extends into and slightly above the parapet tops each pier. A very narrow brick pier that extends from the concrete foundation to the top of the second story splits each pair of windows. The parapet above each pair of windows contains the diamond pattern found in the pavilion and is capped with stone. The area between the first and second stories is carved stone; bays two and five contain decorative metal vents in the left sections.

The stepped central tower in bay six dominates the façade. The first story of the tower provides a sheltered entrance for three metal entrance doors topped by three transoms. The exterior surround for this entrance is limestone with "East Topeka Junior High School" carved above the doorway. The square top of the surround is ornamented with a band of circles and topped by two finials at the outside corners. The second story of the tower contains a chamfered bay of three windows topped with three carved limestone panels. A central narrow



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East Topeka Junior High School  
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vent rises from this set of windows, surrounded by limestone and topped by a carved limestone plaque. Brick corner piers rise from the concrete foundation to the first stepped section of the tower. The upper portion of the tower is primarily brick and contains chamfered edges. It is topped by a tile pyramidal roof. The south, east and west upper portions of the tower each contain a central ornamental limestone panel containing a carved face.

Bays seven through eleven are identical in reverse to bays one through five.

**West Façade**

The west façade is 17 bays long and contains two entrances/stairwells, many windows and a rear pavilion. The secondary façades contains ornament that is similar to, but more subdued than, that on the main façade.

Moving from south to north (right to left), bay one begins with the corner pier that wraps the corner of bay one on the south façade. Bays two and three each contain sets of three joined windows on the first and second stories. Sections of concrete separate the first and second stories and delineate the basement level. Bay two and three are separated by a narrow brick pier topped by carved stone, identical to the narrow piers on the south façade. One section parapet tops these two bays, containing a design of buff and brown brick in a diamond pattern topped by a stone cap. Bay three contains an entrance/stairwell pulled slightly forward from the plane of the building. This bay consists of a first-story entrance and second-story windows surrounded on either side by brick walls. The entrance surround is an abbreviated version of that on the south façade, protecting a pair of metal entrance doors. Six 3/3 windows rise from the top of the surround to the base of the parapet. The parapet extends above the roof level and contains a central section of carved limestone surrounded by sections of patterned brick. Bays four through nine are configured identical to bays one and two. Wide brick piers matching those on the south façade rise from ground level to the roofline left of bays five and seven. Bay ten contains an entrance/stairwell identical to bay three. Bays eleven through sixteen are configured identical to bays four through nine. Bay seventeen of the west façade is a solid brick wall with a single window located slightly below the second story. Wide brick piers surround bay seventeen; the pier on the northwest corner of the building wraps around the north side.

**East Façade**

The configuration of the east façade is virtually identical to that of the west façade, except for the addition of the exterior entrance to the gymnasium at the far north end. From left to right (south to north), bays one through twelve match the west façade in window and pier configuration, ornamentation and in the placement of entrances/stairwells in the third and tenth bays. The north end of the east façade is filled by a projecting wall and exterior entrance for the school's gymnasium. The one-story entrance features carved limestone and limestone pillars surrounding three sets of double metal doors. Brick walls on either side of the entrance doors are topped with carved limestone. The two-story east brick wall of the gymnasium rises behind this entrance, topped by an arched parapet. Three tall, narrow windows, alternating with four panels of carved stone, are placed midway up this wall.



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East Topeka Junior High School  
Shawnee County, Kansas

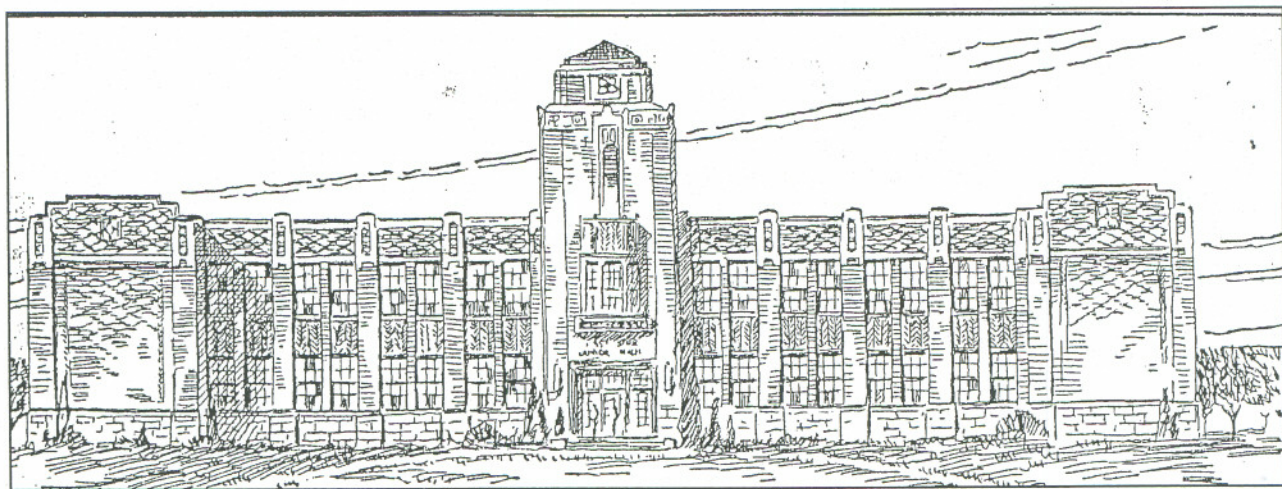
**North Façade**

The rear (north side) of the building is purely functional, displaying the curved roof of the gymnasium in the left portion, the squared west wing in the right portion and a central courtyard that separates the two halves of the building. The gymnasium has five pairs of tall, narrow windows on its north side; brick piers rising to the upper level of the windows separate each pair. The central courtyard, which serves as a light well, contains windows on the first and second stories on all three sides. The right half of the north façade begins with a tall exhaust chimney. Windows are sporadically placed on the first and second stories of this section of the building. The ornamented parapet and two central wide brick piers of this area are consistent with those found on the other façades.

**Interior**

The interior of the school retains its original configuration (see floor plans) and finishes. The corridors of the school, lined with classrooms, form a square around the area occupied by the auditorium. Office space and the former library are located on the front of the building's first story. The rear wings are filled with classrooms or the gymnasium. The school's gymnasium, auditorium and classrooms are still present and basically intact. Glazed blocks rise approximately five feet up hallway walls and are topped with plaster walls. Hall floors are terrazzo and most classrooms have fir floors. Details such as wood moldings, chalkboards, light fixtures, lockers, auditorium seats and bleachers are still in place.

East Topeka Junior High School retains much of its integrity. The exterior has changed little from the year of its construction, with the exception of two missing sconces on the main entrance and the addition of metal screens on the windows. The school was abandoned for many years and suffered some damage from the elements. The building now has a new boiler and new roof and is undergoing cleaning, repair and restoration for future use.



1935 Architectural Elevation<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "New East Topeka Junior High Would Cost \$380,000," *The Topeka Journal*, 9 September 1935.

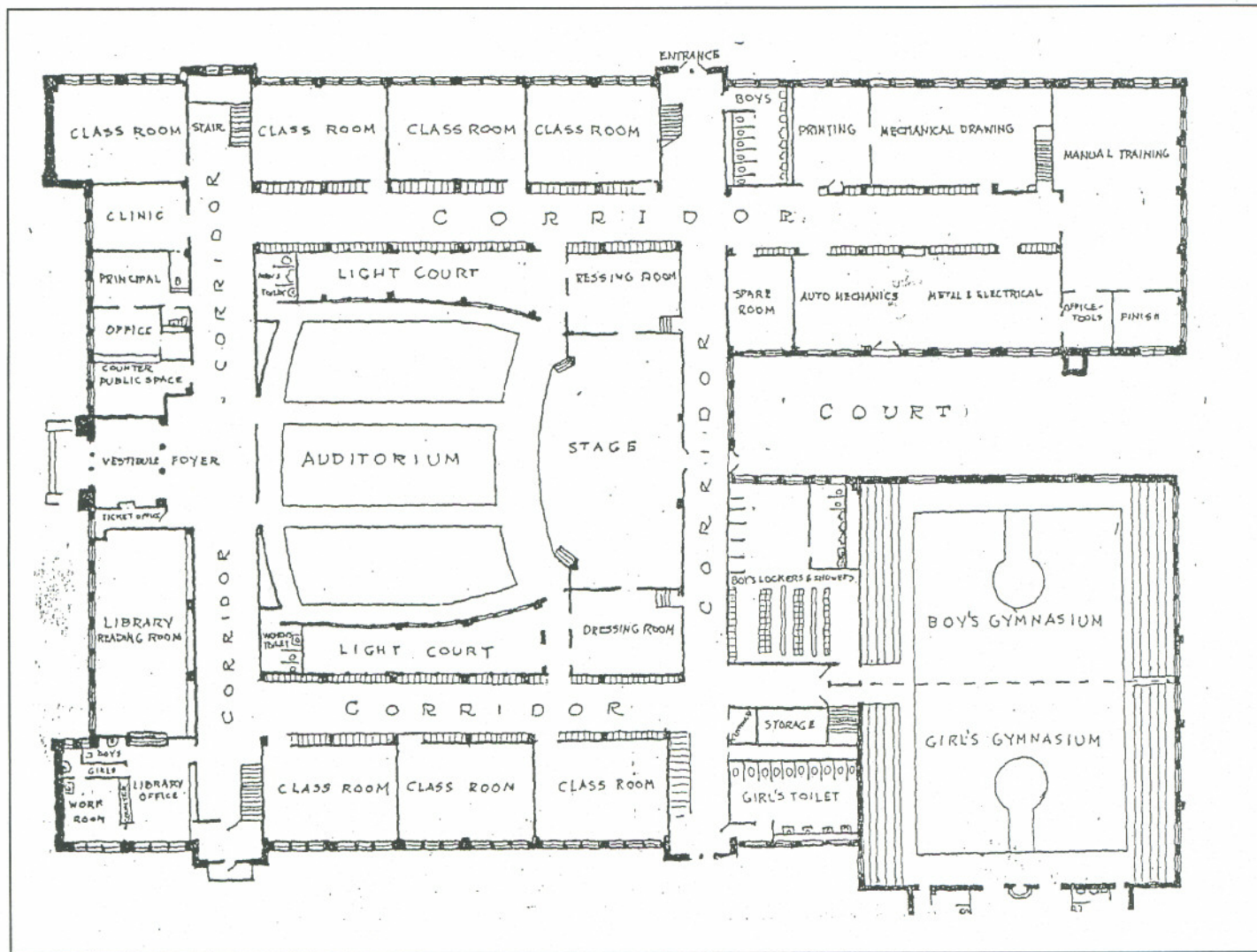


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Shawnee County, Kansas



First Story Plan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

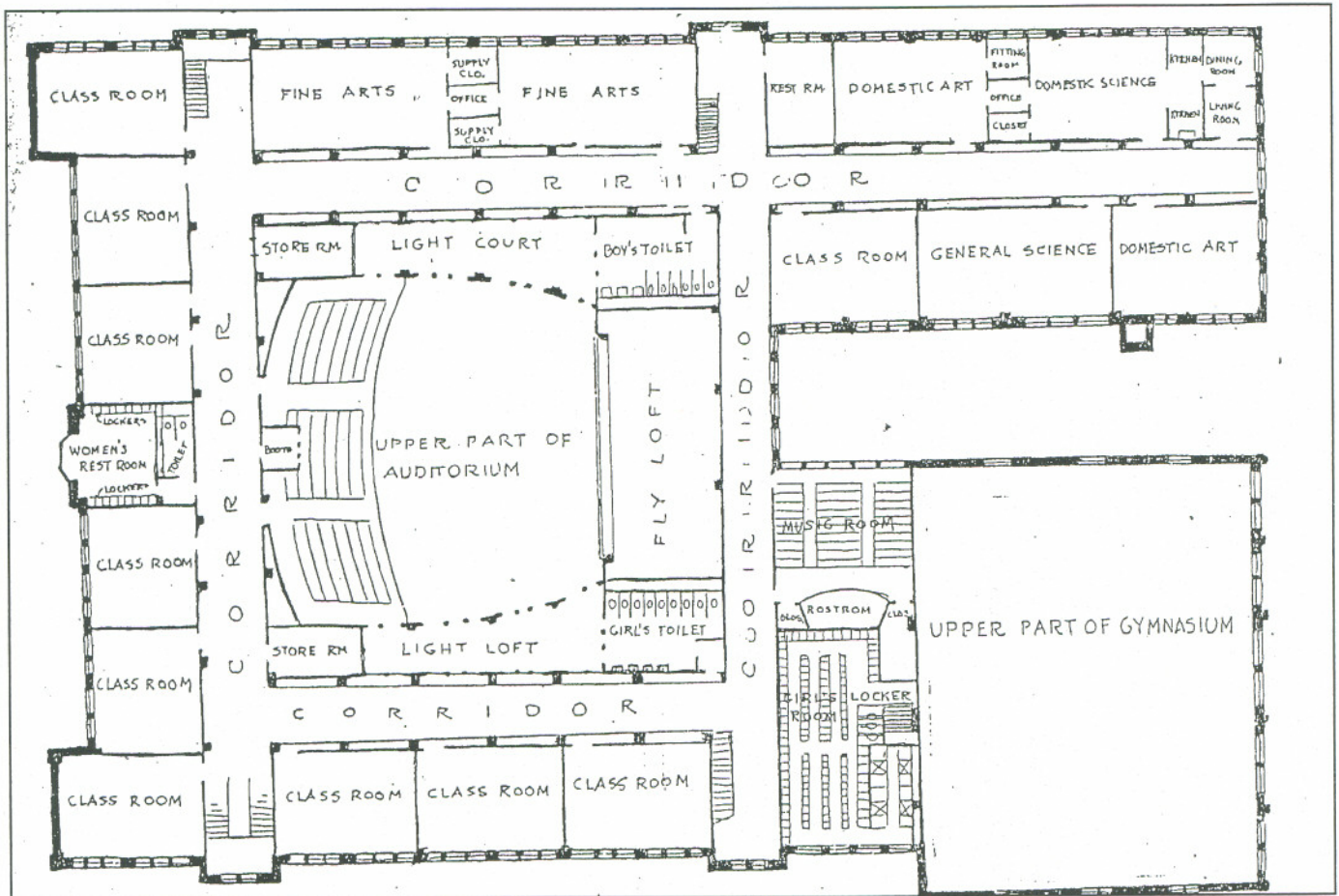


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Second Story Plan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



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East Topeka Junior High School  
Shawnee County, Kansas

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**Statement of Significance**

The East Topeka Junior High School building, located at 1210 E. Eighth Street in Topeka, Kansas was constructed from 1935 until 1936. It is eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the category of Education. Significant for its association with the Topeka School District, the East Topeka Junior High School was originally intended to evolve into a high school. Therefore, it was overbuilt with an extremely large auditorium, gymnasium and public library. The school served the neighborhood of East Topeka and housed a racially diverse student population until it closed in 1980.

The building is also significant under Criterion A for its association with the New Deal program. The school was constructed under the Public Works Administration, a federal emergency relief program described in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas." Construction under the PWA falls under the general requirements to nominate a building as part of the "New Deal-Era" MPD. The striking building also significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of the Art Deco style. Upon completion, the East Topeka Junior High School was considered the most modern school in the city, with an innovative floor plan, state-of-the-art equipment and a stunning exterior. The building maintains much of its integrity with an intact original floor plan, as well as exterior Art Deco ornament in the buff brick, terra cotta ornament and structural projections.

**History of the School**

Construction for the massive East Topeka Junior High School began in 1935. The school sits on a block bound by Lime Street on the east, Lake Street on the west, Sixth Street on the north and Seventh Street on the south. East Topekans had been agitating for a new school for several years, as the nearby Lincoln School, built in 1917 at Fifth and Madison Streets to hold grades one through eight, was overcrowded and the city's high school neared capacity.<sup>4</sup> Bonds for the new school were issued in April 1935. By October, the site had been chosen and the Topeka School Board had accepted the federal government's offer of PWA assistance for the construction. Negotiations began to purchase the 21 houses located on the three city blocks that held the future school site.<sup>5</sup>

The first Topeka Junior High Schools, Quincy and Sumner, were organized in the summer of 1917. The movement to construct schools to house seventh, eighth and ninth grades continued. Curriculum in Topeka typically included algebra, geometry, physical education, and languages, such as French, German or Latin.

The plans for the grand, new school, designed by the prominent Topeka architectural firm of Cuthbert and Suehrk, were published in city newspapers, undoubtedly escalating enthusiasm for the project. The building was planned to permit full community use even during school hours. The library and auditorium would be located near exterior doors; hallway gates could easily close off access to the rest of the school during evening use. The gymnasium, located on the east side of the building, would even have its own exterior entrance. The fireproof structure would be constructed of reinforced concrete, clad in tan brick and trimmed with cut stone. Construction costs were estimated at \$380,000, with the Public Works Administration furnishing \$170,000. The

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel Fitzgerald, ed., *Gone But Not Forgotten: The Lost Schools of Topeka*, (Topeka: Shawnee County Historical Society, 1990), 41.

<sup>5</sup> "Site For School," *The Topeka State Journal*, 22 October 1935.



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East Topeka Junior High School  
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new school would accommodate 900 students and was promoted as easily convertible to a senior high school at a late date, if needed.<sup>6</sup>

The building was ready for occupation in January 1937. Although classes began in it in February of that year, the formal opening to the public was held in March. Nearly 2000 visitors toured the classrooms and multi-purpose areas, overwhelmed at the beauty and modern features.<sup>7</sup> The new school's auditorium seated 800. It contained a stage with footlights, dressing rooms and velvet drapes. The gymnasium floor was described as "mirror-like." Folding bleachers could accommodate 800 fans and the facility contained separate locker rooms and showers for boys and girls. A public address system could be heard from the main office throughout the entire school. The library was designed for use as a branch of the city library, which it did so until 1942. The first story of the building contained eight classrooms, in addition to the gym, auditorium, library and office. Four stairways led to the second story and more classrooms, several designed specifically designed for science, art, home economics and industrial arts classes.

Photographs of graduating classes, each holding approximately 100 students, appeared yearly in local newspapers, as did occasional brief articles and photographs of journalism classes. The school was racially integrated from the first graduating class and the percentage of African-American students increased in the 1950s and 1960s.

The school suffered an auditorium fire in 1957 that damaged the curtains, wood floor, windows and plaster walls. Arson was found to be the cause of the fire, but classes were never suspended due to the incident.

East Topeka Junior High School closed in 1980, due to shifting populations and a decline in students.<sup>8</sup> The school was identified by the Topeka Unified School District 501 Board of Education as one of five junior high schools scheduled to close as part of a 1976 long-range plan. During the summer and fall of 1980, East Topeka community organizations began searching for a use for the building. Suggestions included using the school for a community center, as office space and as a center for the elderly.

Two neighborhood activists, George Irving and J.B. Anderson, picked up the plan for a community center. In December 1980, the school reopened as the Anderson-Irving Multipurpose Center. The building was leased from the school district by the City of Topeka. Some of the classrooms were converted into offices for various social service agencies, but no major remodeling took place. The center ran into difficulties when it was estimated that improvements needed to attract and retain tenants would cost about \$300,000. City officials were advised that the city could not issue bonds to improve a building that it did not own. In addition to financial difficulties, the anticipated senior citizen groups chose to operate out of another location. Topeka city commissioners decided in June 1982 to evict the tenants and return the building to the school district.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "New East Topeka Junior High Would Cost \$380,000," *The Topeka State Journal*, 9 September 1936.

<sup>7</sup> "Topekans View Newest Addition to School System," *The Topeka State Journal*, 19 March 1937.

<sup>8</sup> "Plans nearly complete for school conversion," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, 5 September 1980, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> "City to shut down Anderson-Irving," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, 2 June 1982, p. 1.



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Shawnee County, Kansas

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The Topeka school board listed the building for sale at \$275,000 in 1983. The school building was nearly sold in September 1983 to the Rev. Milton Perry<sup>10</sup> and in November 1983 to Joseph Held.<sup>11</sup> Both negotiations were uncompleted. For several years, the building was vacant, the roof leaked and animals found their way inside. The Rev. Lee A. Sweet, the current owner, purchased the neglected building in May 1987. Sweet's organization, the True Foundation, plans to soon provide manual training in the facility, as well as a private elementary and middle school. The non-profit organization of approximately 100 members has spent time cleaning the school, repairing broken windows and replacing damaged floors, the roof and boiler.

**Design and Construction**

East Topeka Junior High School was partially funded by the Public Works Administration, recorded as Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works Project No. 1145. The PWA was created in 1933 by Congress to "prepare a comprehensive program of public works,"<sup>12</sup> that included the construction of schools, government buildings, armories, dams, roads and bridges. The primary purpose of the program was to aid in recovery from the Great Depression by encouraging states to plan construction projects in advance, thus stabilizing employment. The PWA program made grants and loans to cities, states or other public bodies for heavy construction work, but private companies carried out all contracting. The infusion of cash by the PWA projects significantly impacted hundreds of communities across the country.

East Topeka Junior High School is one of 6000 school projects undertaken by the PWA within its first three years. By 1936, the program had added 29,418 new elementary and high school classrooms across the country.<sup>13</sup> Schools dominated PWA projects in Kansas, comprising 20 of the 35 new buildings constructed in the state by 1939.<sup>14</sup> The application for a PWA grant to supplement local funds for the East Topeka Junior High School estimated construction at \$228,000; heating, plumbing and ventilation at \$40,000; electrical contracting at \$15,000; landscaping at \$24,000 and miscellaneous expenses at \$72,000.<sup>15</sup> The PWA aid totaling \$171,000 hinged on the school board's acceptance of proposed plans and the site at Eighth and Lake Streets. Once the site and design were confirmed, federal aid would be approved. The plans were accepted at a meeting of the school board in October 1935.<sup>16</sup>

The school is designed in a late version of the Art Deco style, popular from the early 1920s through 1940. Art Deco was a purely decorative style, defined by ornament rather than form. The style is rooted in Europe as a geometric development of the earlier Art Nouveau style. The difference lies in the fact that Art Nouveau stressed gracefulness and softness, but Art Deco emphasized strong angular or curvilinear geometric patterns.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "Evangelist fails to meet deadline," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, 15 October 1983, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> "Board to consider offer to buy building," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, 15 November 1983, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, *The Story of the PWA; Building for Recovery* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), 1.

<sup>13</sup> *The Story of PWA in Pictures* (Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, May 1936).

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Rosin, "New Deal-era Resources of Kansas." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 2002, 11.

<sup>15</sup> *The Topeka State Journal*, 9 September 1935.

<sup>16</sup> *The Topeka State Journal*, 22 October 1935.

<sup>17</sup> Leland M. Roth. *American Architecture, A History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000) 374.



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East Topeka Junior High School  
Shawnee County, Kansas

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The style, even in the mid-1930s, was considered quite advanced. Simply put, Art Deco was the most up to date and the most appropriate style for a large, new school in Topeka during this time. Art Deco is credited with providing an ornamental language ideal for the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Skilled craftsmanship could be utilized in buildings in an entirely new way. This style and its new form of ornament seemed especially fitting for a building constructed under the auspices of a 'make work' program.<sup>18</sup>

Art Deco ornament often accentuated verticality through the symmetrical placement of rectangular projections around entrances,<sup>19</sup> as seen in the East Topeka Junior High School building. The overall form of the school demonstrates the style with low relief on the main façade, geometric curves of the parapets and a vertical emphasis on the stepped central tower. Art Deco decorative elements can be seen, especially on the main façade, in the patterns of two-toned brick that mimic polychrome ornament, piers between the windows and stylized accents of carved stone. The Art Deco style embraced modernity and served as an appropriate style for the most modern school in Topeka.

Cuthbert and Suehrk served as the architects for the East Topeka Junior High School. Charles Cuthbert was a native Topekan, serving as the state architect for Kansas from 1925 until 1930 under Governor Ben Paulen. The firm of Cuthbert and Suehrk designed many Topeka buildings, including the 1928 Gem Building at 508 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street and the 1951 Garlinghouse Building at 820 South Quincy Street. Reknown Topeka architect Walter Earl Glover served as associate architect for the building. After serving in the architectural department of the United States Navy during World War I, Glover opened his office in Topeka in 1919, where he practiced into the 1950s. His accomplishments there included the Charles M. Sheldon Community House, the Storemont Hospital and the Valley Park School.

In *American Architecture, A History*, Leland Roth writes, "The period between 1915 and 1940 witnessed what was perhaps the most radical change in American architecture." He goes on to note that the very best public buildings were constructed during this time, due to a number of factors that included low material and labor costs, an abundance of skilled artisans and municipal money available to fund projects. This statement could well have been written about the East Topeka Junior High School, a stunning public building designed and built in a new style that was somewhat revolutionary for its time and place, but which has continued as an architectural focal point within its neighborhood.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Marcus Whiffen. *American Architecture Since 1780* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996) 235.



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*The Topeka State Journal:*

- "Site For School." 22 October 1935.
- "New East Topeka Junior High Would Cost \$380,000." 9 September 1936.
- "Topekans View Newest Addition to School System." 19 March 1937.
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- "East Topeka Junior High 1940 Graduates." 23 May 1940.
- "Arson Suspected in School Blaze." 2 March 1957.
- "Old school considered as center." 14 July 1980, p. 17.



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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The East Topeka Junior High School building is located on Lake Street Lots 220 through 246 even numbered, Lime Street Lots 219 through 245 even numbered, Eighth Street Lots 364 through 374 even numbered and adjoining vacated alleys in the Parkdale Addition of Topeka, Kansas. The property is bounded in the east by Lime Street, on the west by Lake Street, on the north by Seventh Street and on the south by Eighth Street.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries encompass the area historically associated with the East Topeka Junior High School building.

**Photographic Information**

The following information is consistent for all photographs:

1. East Topeka Junior High School building
2. Shawnee County, Kansas
3. Susan Jezak Ford, photographer
5. Negatives located at Kansas State Historical Society

The following information is applicable to specific photographs:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 4. 21 August 2002                  | 4. 8 April 2003                          |
| 6. Northwest view of south façade  | 6. South view of north façade            |
| 7. #1                              | 7. #5                                    |
| 4. 21 August 2002                  | 4. 8 April 2003                          |
| 6. Southwest view of east façade   | 6. East interior view of classroom       |
| 7. #2                              | 7. #6                                    |
| 4. 21 August 2002                  | 4. 8 April 2003                          |
| 6. West view of gymnasium entrance | 6. Northeast interior view of auditorium |
| 7. #3                              | 7. #7                                    |
| 4. 21 August 2002                  | 4. 8 April 2003                          |
| 6. Northeast view of west façade   | 6. Southeast interior view of auditorium |
| 7. #4                              | 7. #8                                    |





EAST TOPEKA  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
UTM COORDINATES  
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EAST TOPEKA INTERCHANGE 0.3 MI.

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INTERCHANGE 20 MI.  
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